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Inaugural Dissertation
Read March 1829

on
Digestion.

Submitted for the degree of M.D.
in the University of Pennsylvania,

by

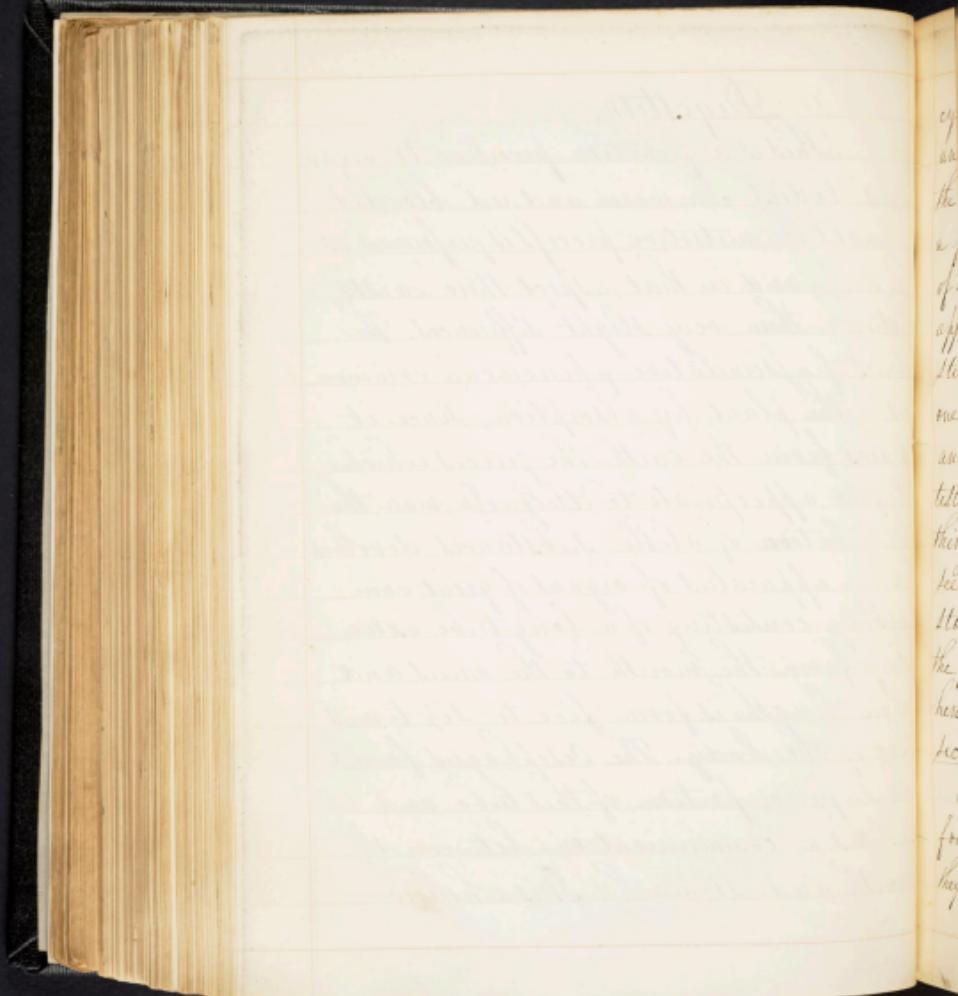
Horatio C. Morris
of
Pennsylvania.

Feb. 24th 1829

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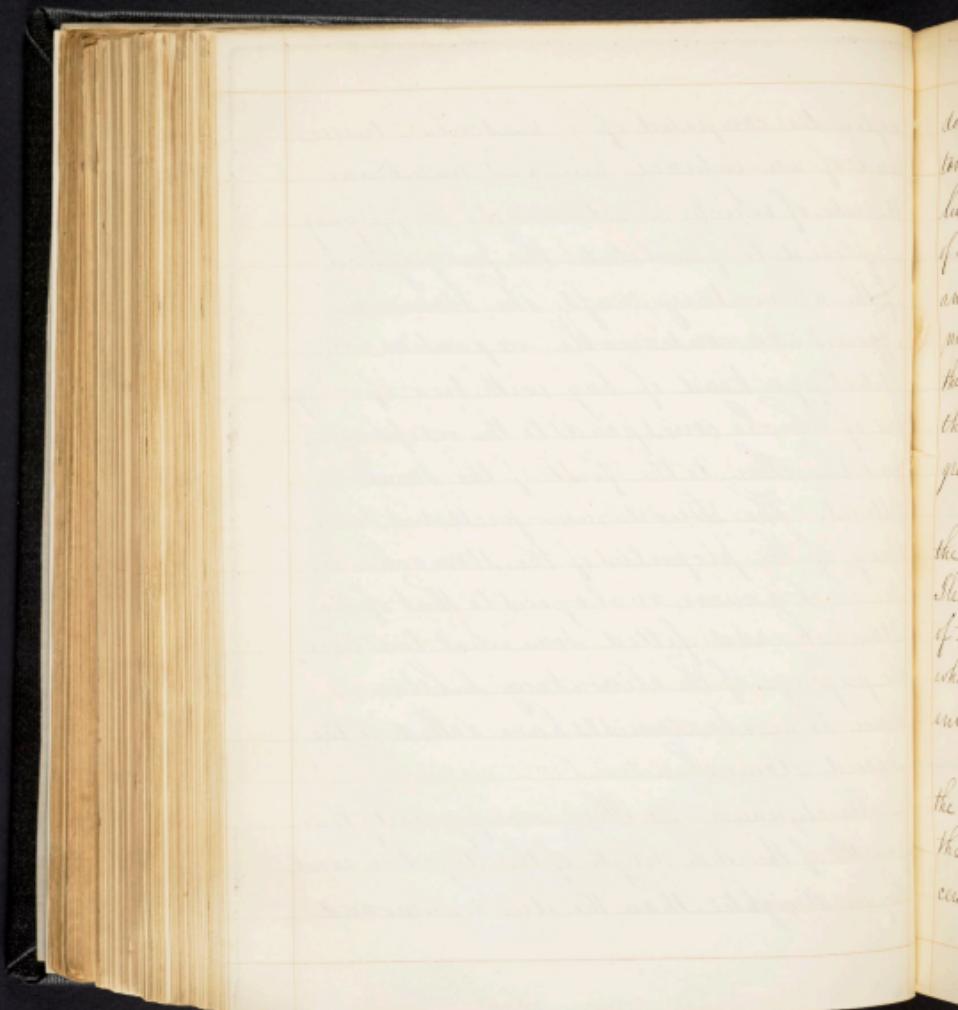
Digestion.

This is a function peculiar to organized bodies, the warm and red-blooded animals the nutritive process is performed as in man, and in that respect there exists, between them very slight differences. The series of assimilative phenomena commences in the plant by absorption, since it draws from the earth the juices which it is to appropriate to itself. In man the assimilation of aible substances devolves on an apparatus of organs of great complexity, consisting of a long tube extending from the mouth to the anus and whose length is from five to six times that of the body. The Oesophagus forms the superior portion of that tube and establishes a communication between the mouth and stomach. It is a hollow



cylinder composed of a muscular tunic and of an internal mucous membrane the use of which is restricted to supplying a fluid to facilitate the pre-gestion of the alimentary mass. The Stomach appears as a considerable expansion constituting a kind of bag with two openings, one of which corresponds to the oesophagus, and the other to the first of the small intestines. The Duodenum preserves something of the properties of the stomach. We see in it a curve analogous to that of the stomach and fitted somewhat to retard the passage of the alimentary substances, hence some Anatomists have called it the second stomach.

The Sijnum and Ileum occupy nearly three fourths of the whole length of the digestive canal; they are straighter than the duodenum and



do not dilate so readily because the peritoneum which forms their outer covering lies over their whole surface with the exception of the posterior border, at which their vessels and nerves enter. After having described a number of convolutions placed one above the other, the small intestines terminate at the Ileo-coccal valve, a fresh narrowing of great interest to the Physiological Physician,

The large intestine is separated from the inferior portion of the small one, called Ileum, by this valve which is simply a fold of the internal membrane, the free border of which corresponds to the cecum, a kind of enlargement or sac, whence begins the Colon.

The Colon constitutes the major part of the large intestines. Its mucous coat is thicker than that of the small intestines, partaking of cerebral, spiral and gauglionic nerves of the

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duodenum, stomach, kidneys, bladder and vagina, must be endowed with more sensibility than the floating portion of the small intestine, which only communicates with the brain by the small cords that connect the great sympathetic with that organ.

The digestive canal, properly so called begins at the superior or Cardiac orifice of the Stomach, and terminates at the Anus. The parieties of the digestive tube are muscular; a mucus coat lines its inside, and lastly a serous or peritoneal is reflected over it, forming an external covering.

The mucous tissue exhibits follicles or glands placed between it and the muscular coat, the use of which is to secrete a fluid which passes through this membrane by means of excretory ducts, and lubricates the smooth interior of the digestive canal.

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The muscular coat may be considered a long hollow muscle formed by two layers of fibers, the one set longitudinal and the other circular. This coat is closely united to the mucous membrane by a cellular tissue.

After this hurried view of the digestive organs, let us turn to the process itself. The aliment having reached the Stomach are there submitted to the process called assimilation. The gastric surface being irritable, and stimulated by the aliment, furnishes them with a fluid from its own tissue, and it also irritates those of the liver, pancreatic and salivary glands. The food remains in the Stomach a longer or shorter space of time, according as by its nature it yields more or less readily to the changes which it has to undergo. The food is now transformed into a grayish substance called chyme. It is acid, and at length becomes

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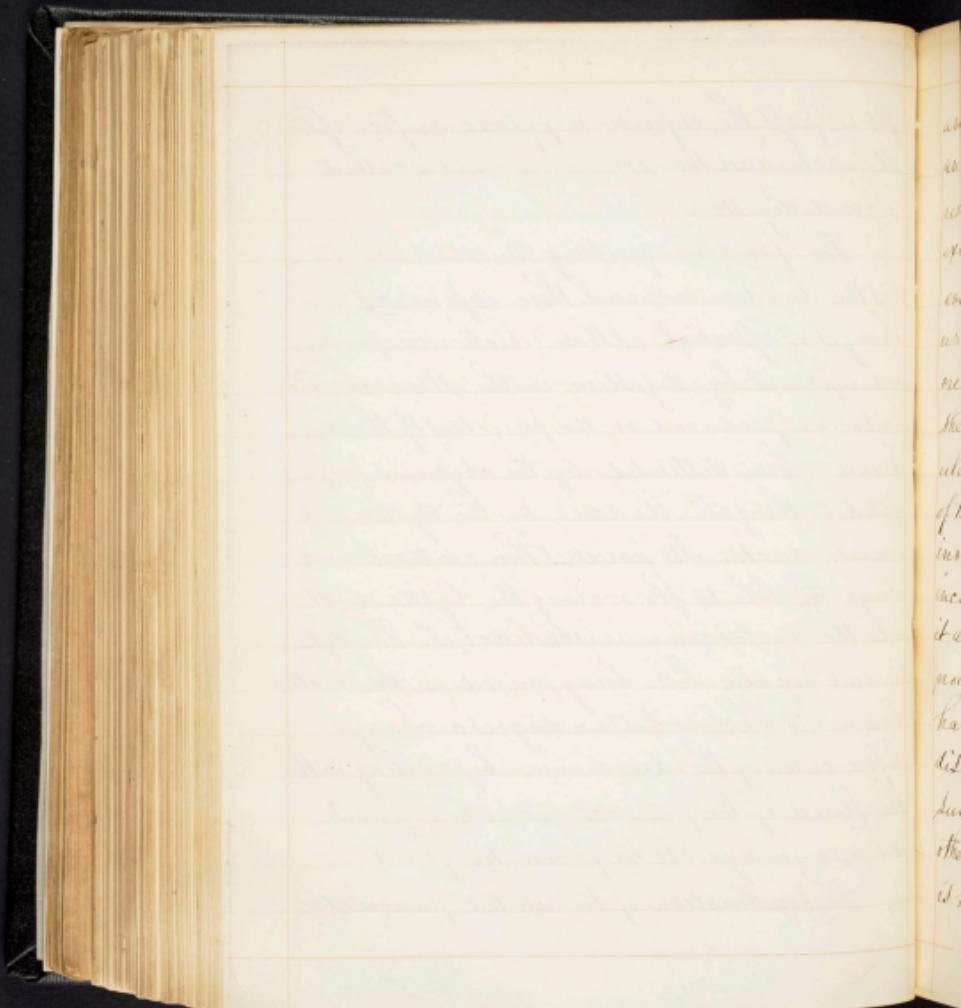
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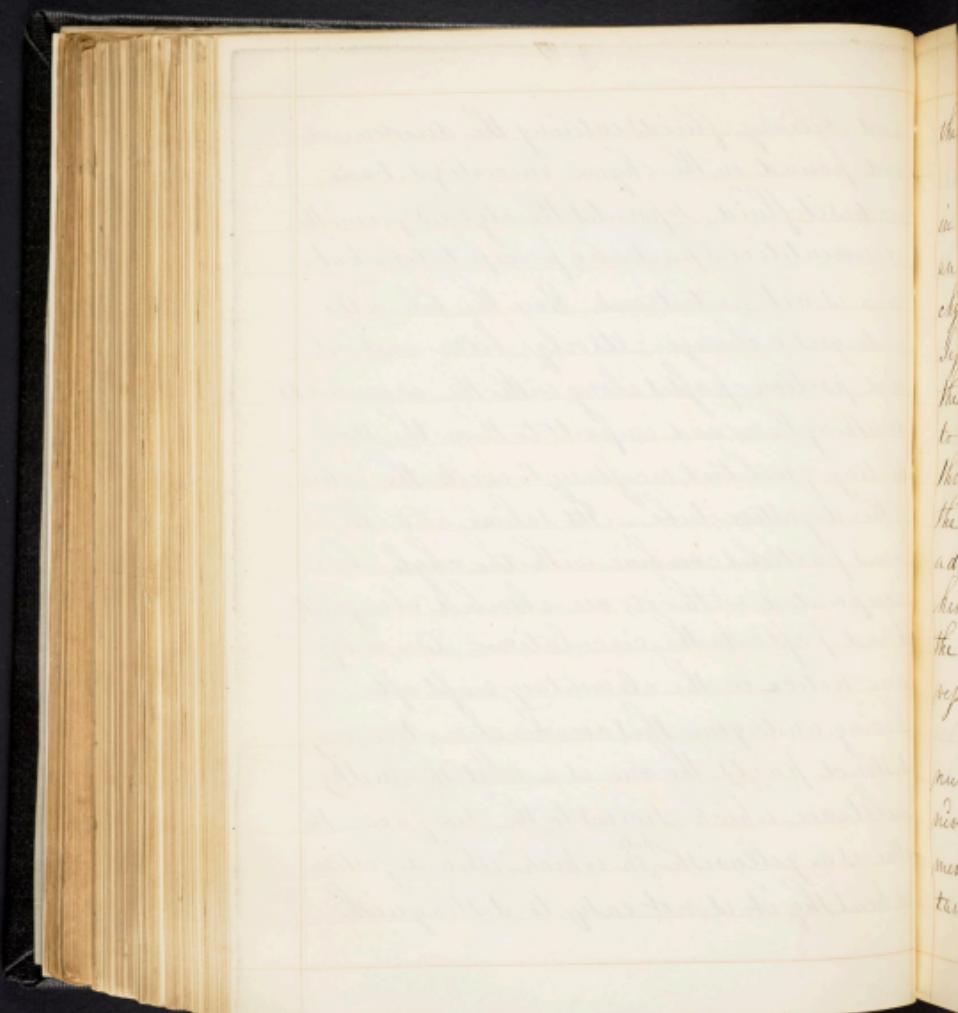
fit to pass the inferior or pyloric orifice of the Stomach, and then commences what is called Second digestion.

The food on quitting the Stomach enters the duodenum, and there experiences new changes as essential as those which were produced upon it by digestion in the Stomach. The irritation produced on the parieties of the duodenum when distended by the chyme is propagated to the gall bladder, by the Cystic and common ducts. Its parieties then contract and oblige the bile to flow along the Cystic duct into the "ductus communis Choledochus." The cystic and hepatic bile being mixed in the "ductus Communis Choledochus" undergoes a change before entering the duodenum by uniting with the fluid of the pancreas yet nothing precise is known in regard to the pancreatic fluid.

The combination of the united pancreatic



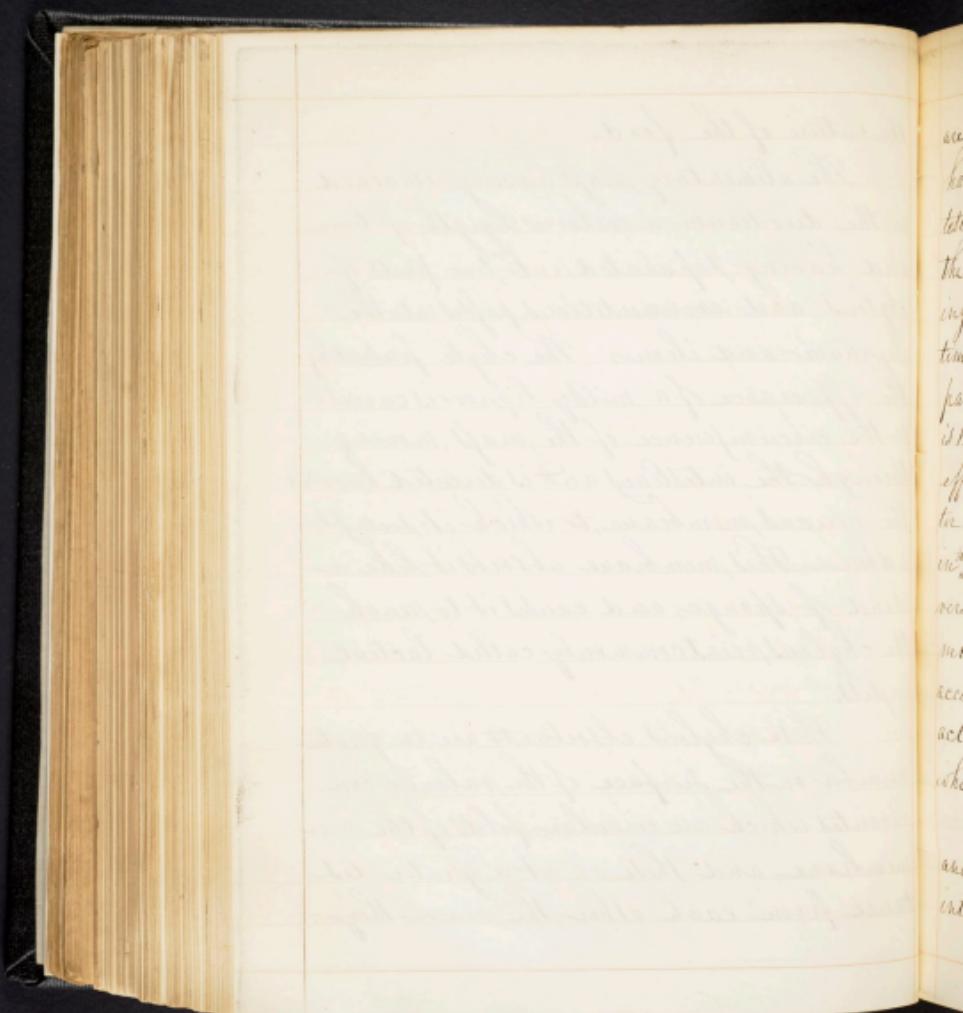
and biliary fluids entering the duodenum
and pour'd on the chyme animalizes it ~~and~~
renders it fluid, separates the chyle from the
excrementitious part and precipitates what
ever is not nutritious. Here the bile also
undergoes a change; its oily, bitter and col-
ored portion passes along with the excrements
sheathing them, and imparts to them the stim-
ulating qualities necessary to excite the actions
of the digestive tube. Its saline and album-
inous particles combine with the chyle, become
incorporated with it, are absorbed along with
it and pass into the circulation. We may
now notice in the alimentary mass, after
having undergone this combination, two very
distinct parts. The one is a whitish milky
substance which sooms to the surface. The
other is a yellowish ^{sub}which, when digestion
is healthy, it is not easy to distinguish



the nature of the food.

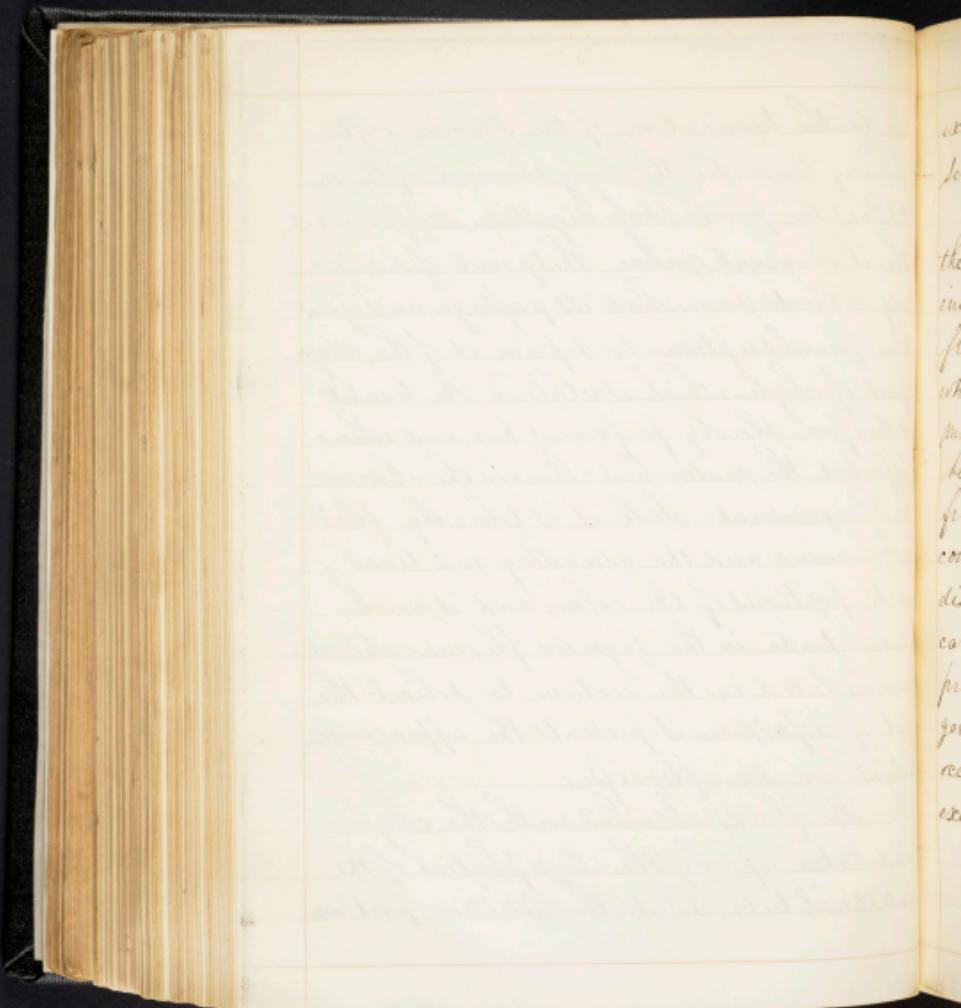
The alimentary mass having remained in the duodenum a certain length of time, and having separated into two parts of chyle and excrementitious, passes into the Jejunum and ileum. The chyle presenting the appearance of a milky liquor is carried to the circumference of the mass, moving through the intestines and is ducted towards the mucus membrane, to which it seems to adhere. This membrane absorbs it like a kind of sponge, and causes it to pouch the chylous veins, commonly called lacteal vessels.

These chylous absorbents are in greater number on the surface of the valvulae conniventes which are circular folds of the inner membrane, and these are at a greater distance from each other, the nearer they



are to the termination of the Ileum. After having traversed the long channel of the intestine, the product of digestion approaches the ileo-coccal valve, this point of narrowing, retards somewhat its passage, and gives time for absorption to deprive it of the major part of chyle which is retained. The transit is therefore slowly performed here, and when effected the matter has obtained the character of excrement. Still it is tolerably fluid into coccus, and the ascending and transverse portions of the colon, and is much more dense in the sigmoid flexure, and when accumulated in the rectum to solicit the act of defaction, it presents the appearance which we see after issue.

The fluids absorbed with the chyle and taken up by the Lymphatics of the intestinal tube dilute the nutritive part.



extracted from the solid aliment, and
serve it as a vehicle.

When they have reached the mass of
the blood, they increase its quantity, dimin-
ish its viscosity, and render it more
fluid, going along with it throughout the
whole course of the circulation, supplying
moisture to all parts of the body. They
become loaded with molecules detached
from them by the vital motion. They
conveyed to the urinary organs, they become
disengaged from the rest of the fluids,
carrying along with them a number of
products of every kind which by a lon-
ger stay in the animal economy would
occasion a manifest disturbance in the
exercise of the functions.

